

Greetings

History, the Criminal Justice System, and Today: An Analysis of Historical Events and
Their Significance in Modern Day Criminal Justice and America

An Honors Thesis (Honors 499)

By

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Abstract

This paper details the significance of four important, yet often overlooked, historical events in America's past. Summaries of the events, as well as an analysis of each, are the emphases of this paper. Extensive research was conducted so as to determine the impact that these four events have on modern day life in America. The analyses emphasize the importance of these events in relation to the criminal justice system. This project was undertaken with the hope that the result would be a greater understanding of differences between races and genders, as well as enhancement of the importance of tolerance in the modern world.

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Introduction

History is the basis for the present. Throughout history every event has impacted the way we live today. Every event has shaped the world, from the location of ethnic populations to the drawing of national borders. When analyzing virtually every subject it is necessary to first start at the origin. The analysis must trace the evolution of an event and the resulting effects on today's world. This is the reason to analyze historical events in America's past and evaluate the modern day effects on race and gender issues, particularly issues involving the criminal justice system.

Four specific events in America's history have been chosen for the purposes of this analysis: the Salem Witch Trials, the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, the Trail of Tears, and the Mexican-American War. These four events have impacted the societal interaction of women, the Japanese Americans, the Native Americans, and Hispanics. Due to the influence that these events have had on the sociological environment regarding minority and gender-related interaction it is quite easy to then analyze the impact they have had on the criminal justice system specifically. After providing a summary of the events, the legal issues surrounding these events, as well as the current relationship between these particular groups and criminal justice professionals, will be the main emphasis of the analysis.

Upon completion of this analysis it is hoped that a better understanding of race and gender relations within society as a whole, and the criminal justice system specifically, will ensue. Tolerance is one of the key virtues of any society that wishes to live in relative peace on a day-to-day basis. The education of historical significance and differences is the best path to achieve this goal.

Summary of the Salem Witch Trials

The Salem Witch Trials began in 1692 in Salem Village, Massachusetts, the modern day town of Danvers. The main catalyst thought to be behind the massive witch-hunt was the Puritan religion. This was, at the time, a very strict religion. Puritans believed themselves to be the most righteous of God's people. They believed that non-Puritans, and Puritans that strayed from God's path, would be cast down to Hell, while the "blessed" people would join God in Heaven. Women and men had distinct, separate roles within the religion. Men were obviously the heads of the households. But, those men within the community that did not belong to a church were seen as outcasts and lost their privilege to vote. Women were expected to be obedient, silent helpers to their husbands, as well as good mothers to their children. Within the Puritan religion, it was thought that women were innately more evil than men. The belief was that women were always seeking knowledge that should not be known to them, comparing them to Eve in the Garden of Eden. Women were in no positions of power, until the Salem Witch Trials.

In 1689, a reverend by the name of Cotton Mather published a book entitled Memorable Providences Relating to Witchcraft and Possession. This book was widely read in the colonies, and stirred up the fear of witchcraft in many people. The situation was no different in Salem Village. The hysteria began because a slave in the area, a woman from Barbados by the name of Tituba, entertained some of the young girls in the community with displays of voodoo magic. Soon after these displays, some of the girls began to behave very strangely. They convulsed and contorted, as well as suddenly going unconscious and withdrawing in fear from some unseen spectacle.

These outbursts and abnormalities alarmed Samuel Parris, the reverend at the local church. He sent for a physician to find out if a disease was afflicting the girls. The physician could find no physical symptoms of health related problems. His diagnosis was that witchcraft was at work. The physician believed that the girls were possessed. This diagnosis was most likely reached due to the recent publication and popularity of Cotton Mather's book, which described the symptoms of witchcraft.

As word spread about the girls' behavior, more young girls in the village began to display the same odd behavior. Upon questioning by Samuel Parris, the girls named Tituba as the witch that was tormenting them, as well as two other women in the community. The three women were brought before the local magistrate for questioning. Tituba eventually confessed to practicing witchcraft, and named the two other women with her, as well as two more women, as practicing witchcraft also. Interestingly enough however, the accused that confessed to practicing witchcraft were no longer persecuted. It was believed that since they had confessed, they would have to be judged by God and God alone.

The afflicted girls went on to claim that they could see the "spectral" image, a ghostly-type image, of the witches that tormented them. Once the magistrates accepted this testimony, the girls began to name more people as witches. Arrests occurred frequently. By June, 1692, over 100 people had been charged with witchcraft. This began to catch the attention of the Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. He ordered that a Court of Oyer and Terminer, which means to hear and determine, hold the trials for the accused. "Spectral" evidence was to be admissible.

The first woman to be adjudged guilty was hanged on June 10, 1692. She was to be followed on July 19 by five more women. On August 19, 1692, five more people were hanged, including one woman and a former reverend. On September 19, a man

by the name of Giles Corey was pressed to death under the weight of many rocks. He had refused to testify or say anything about the accusation of practicing witchcraft. He believed that if he did not answer the questions of the court, there could be no trial. Corey was pressed as a form of torture to try to make him answer, but in the end it killed him. Three days later the last eight people were executed. A total of nineteen accused had been hanged, while four others died in prison awaiting trial. Most of the convictions were due to the "spectral" evidence given by those that testified.

In October, 1692, the Governor had had enough of the executions and ordered that "spectral" evidence would no longer be allowed. Of the next fifty-two people who stood trial, forty-nine of them were found not guilty. The accusations began to die down, people were eventually released from prison, and in 1697, the members of the Court of Oyer and Terminer signed a petition asking for forgiveness for their sins.

Analysis of the Salem Witch Trials

One of the main controversies regarding the Salem Witch Trials is the enormous weight given to the "spectral" evidence. What makes this evidence even more controversial is that it came from the testimony of young girls within the community. Until this time, women had always come second to men in the village. When the girls began to name the supposed witches in the community, great faith was placed in the thought that the girls were telling the truth. The girls gave their testimony very convincingly, convulsing and contorting as they pointed toward the accused. It is thought that once the girls began to see how powerful their testimony could be, they took advantage of this position of power. Not only did they take advantage of this power, but the people they named were often upper-class citizens who had always

been thought well of. In most other cases, they named people who were the bane of the community, beggars and poor people.

The powerful weight given to the testimony of the girls did not tip the scales completely regarding gender roles. The officials that made up the court were all men. Some of these men were also reverends in the Puritan religion. It was these Puritans who at first doubted the legitimacy of the young girls' testimony. However, they were swept up in the craze, and once some of the accused began to confess, all doubts were laid to rest. These men of the court still held the same positions of power that they always had, but the girls testifying got a taste of a power over other people that they had never had before.

The procedures of the criminal justice system today are obviously much different than the practices of the courts in 1692. Some of the evidence that was admitted against the accused would never be allowed in a courtroom today. Once people were accused of practicing witchcraft, it took considerably strong evidence refuting that accusation to set the person free. With most of the accused, the idea was that they were guilty as charged. However, after the errors of the Salem Witch Trials were revealed only a few years later, the idea of guilty as charged changed drastically to the idea of innocent until proven guilty. This idea, in theory, is the standard for American courtrooms today. We can thank the fear of another witch-hunt for this beneficial course of thought.

There are other differences between the criminal justice system of today and that of 1692 Massachusetts. While it can be argued that the testimony of the young girls in Salem Village constituted probable cause for an arrest, it usual takes some collaborative evidence to make an arrest in today's society. In modern day thought, taking away a person's freedom is one of the worst punishments. This is why major

arrests today are carefully considered by police officers that must not abuse their discretion.

Once an accused person was arrested in Salem Village, they were not allowed to post bond for release. This was true with every arrest to take place during the witch-hunt. In the modern criminal justice system, bond is usually only denied to people who are accused of committing the most heinous crimes, such as murder. Of course, the people of Salem Village did not have Constitutional rights regarding this issue. The procedure then was mostly taken from the model of English Law, and practicing witchcraft was one of the most serious crimes, due to the Puritan religion that was most prevalent in the area at this time.

Since we guard the notion of the separation of church and state today, women and men in the criminal justice profession today find differences through thought of past gender roles. Many men still believe that a woman's place is at home, cooking, cleaning, and raising the children. Some men believe that a woman does not belong in the criminal justice field due to the fact that it has been historically, and generally still is, a male dominated profession. The upper echelons of the field also consist mainly of males. However, as the number of women entering the criminal justice field increases, men will have no choice but to accept the fact that women are capable of doing the same type of work as them. Although this could never have occurred in 1692, if it had, maybe court would have been more balanced and the tragic witch-hunt would have never occurred.

Summary of the Internment of Japanese Americans during World War II

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941, the United States was at war with the Empire of Japan. As a result, the anti-Japanese sentiment in America began to reach a critical point. At this time, there was a huge population of Asian Americans on the West Coast. As the war raged on, the military began to fear more and more for the safety of the bases and personnel located on this coast. Since the threat of invasion was not a main concern, the real threat came in the form of sabotage by Japanese agents that were possibly already in the country. The fear of American citizens creating a scapegoat of the Japanese Americans also caused concerns. With these thoughts in mind, the government came to an inevitable and costly decision.

The decision was to prohibit persons of Japanese descent to live on the West Coast. On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order Number 9066. This Order allowed the Secretary of War to designate certain areas within the United States as military zones. Any area that carried this designation was not to allow "any persons whose presence was deemed prejudicial to the national defense" to reside there. Soon after this Executive Order, the military designated the states of California, Oregon, and Washington as military zones. This meant that the large Japanese American population in these states would have to be relocated.

Since it was evident after a short time that the Japanese population would not relocate voluntarily, the government took steps to implement a relocation initiative. On March 18, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order Number 9102. This Order established the War Relocation Authority. This organization was to take on the majority of the responsibility of relocation, but the military was to remain involved. The military was needed for the evacuation process, as well as for the construction of

buildings and housing at the relocation centers. However, their most important duty was to act as the guards at the relocation installations.

In a very short time, the military had constructed enough internment camps to house approximately 100,000 people. These centers were constructed on racetracks and fairgrounds, with the largest camp at the Santa Anita racetrack. These facilities allowed for an ample supply of water and electricity. The relocation effort was to include any person of Japanese ancestry, regardless of whether or not they were American citizens born in the United States. Such people living within the designated military zones were to report to the local War Relocation Authority centers. After reporting, they were given a few days to make arrangements for their property, and to pack their belongings. Then, they were escorted to either a train or bus, and taken to one of the sixteen "assembly centers" where they would be kept until arrangements could be secured for their relocation to the interior of the country.

Every one of the internment camps was surrounded by barbed wire fence and guarded by military personnel. Each of the camps were constructed with small buildings all in a row. They were similar to barracks, but usually only one or two families shared the buildings, depending on the size of the families. Schools and hospitals were constructed as well, usually with help from volunteers within the camps. The Japanese attempted to preserve some semblance of normal life. However, no one was allowed to leave the camps. Visitors were allowed, but only at certain times on certain days, just like a prison. By the end of 1942, approximately 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry were imprisoned in the internment camps.

For a couple of years there were only two ways that someone could leave the internment camps, and that was to either join the military, or be approved for work release. Throughout the year of 1944, approximately 35,000 people had left the camps

by these means. This meant that a few of the camps were able to close down. As 1945 progressed, people were allowed to leave the camps by the thousands. Some returned to their former homes. For those people whose homes and property had been confiscated or sold, the government helped find temporary housing within a community, as well as employment. By the end of 1945, all but approximately 7,000 Japanese had been allowed to leave the camps and return to their lives. Anti-Japanese sentiment from other American citizens began to subside. Japanese American communities were now spread all over the country. They helped each other reestablish themselves in their communities. All Japanese Americans were given back their rights, all of the camps were closed down, and the Japanese Americans were left with rebuilding their lives.

Analysis of the Japanese Internment Camps

The internment of the Japanese during World War II is especially significant due to the fact that it occurred only sixty years ago. There are people alive today that remember what the experience was like, from both the Japanese and the rest of America's viewpoints. Whenever a war breaks out between two countries, there will always be resentment toward the people of the enemy's race or nationality. The Japanese were relocated because the fear of sabotage or other anti-American actions. Although in today's world the government would not imprison an entire race due to a war, they do watch the actions of individuals within such a population very closely. The current instability between the United States and the Middle East obviously proves this point.

Today, people of Middle Eastern descent may face harassment and discrimination from some Americans. Soon after the terrorist attacks on September 11,

2001, many Americans lashed out at anyone that looked Middle Eastern. One man, who was actually from India, was shot and killed by the same kind of angry people. It was no different in America during World War II. Although German and Italian Americans did not suffer the same kind of treatment, Japanese Americans were harassed and even physically attacked. Many Californians hung signs on their property saying such things as "Go Home Jap!" It seems that society will always be this way. People seem to be trying to do their part to help, but it is really just horrible mistakes stemming from intolerance.

There were those people during this time that opposed the internment of the Japanese. Although they were not thought of in too terrible a light, their opposition was futile. It was only when the legality and constitutionality of the situation was under enough fire that the internment began to slow down and eventually end. While the Japanese were being imprisoned, some lawyers took it upon themselves to plead the case of the Japanese in the courts. At first the judges upheld the right, during wartime, for the federal government to arrest anyone that was seen as a threat to national security. This apparently also included the ability to imprison an entire race. The case even went before the United States Supreme Court. Once again, government's position was upheld. It was only after the war-tide began to turn and the questioning became more intense that the courts finally ruled that the internment camps had to end.

The modern day repercussions of this huge mistake by the government can most certainly still be seen. It is not very often that you can even find a person who, through common knowledge, knows that the Japanese were imprisoned during World War II. This is the type of event that is omitted from the school textbooks. It certainly can not be thought that it is omitted because it is not a significant enough event. The attempted relocation of close to 120,000 people is no small matter. It is omitted because it is an

embarrassment for America. The government has made mistakes before and after this event, but the internment of these people probably created a lasting mistrust of the government. The tragedy of it is comparable to the treatment of African Americans all the way through the Civil Rights Movement. It is hoped, however, that the Japanese Americans continue to be a part of this country. There is much to gain, by all of society, if the Japanese Americans are good enough to remain among us.

Today the Asian Americans are sometimes referred to as the "Model Minority." Asian Americans are referred to as the "Model Minority" because of past and present success of their population. They are also beginning to stake their claim in the criminal justice system, and definitely not as offenders. The number of Asian American prisoners is considerably lower than other minorities. However, the number of Asian Americans entering the field as professionals is rising. Due to the language barrier that can sometimes interfere with the interaction between Asian Americans and criminal justice professionals, it is advantageous to have workers who understand the language, as well as the cultural and ethnic differences. This is true regarding all minorities. More Asian Americans are joining the criminal justice ranks, especially in major cities. This type of profession is usually not the preferred profession of Asian American families, however, it is surely encouraging to watch others do the job and do it successfully.

Summary of the Trail of Tears

In the war-torn time that was the mid- to late-1700's, most Cherokee Indians adopted the ways of the European settlers. Eventually, in 1827, the various tribes in the Southeast came together to create the Cherokee Nation. They believed that their new sovereign nation could live in peace with the United States. However, in 1802, the

federal government had already promised the States, and especially Georgia, that the Indians would be moved out of their lands.

In 1828, Andrew Jackson became president. He was seen by the Cherokees as sympathetic to their cause, due to the fact that they had fought in battles on the same side. However, Jackson was anything but dedicated to helping the Indians. He proposed to Congress the Indian Removal Act. The result of this legislation would be to move the Cherokee Nation west of the Mississippi River. Before this bill could be passed, the State of Georgia passed a few of its own laws, called an Indian Code. These laws stripped all Cherokee Indians of most of the rights they enjoyed as part of the Cherokee Nation, or as a citizen of Georgia.

Many Cherokee leaders tried pleading with President Jackson to let them keep what was rightfully theirs. Jackson did not change his mind. Eventually, Cherokee land was given away to white settlers, while Cherokees still dwelled there. Some Cherokees resisted this effort and were removed by force from their homes and land. Most others simply accepted this fate and moved deeper into the Cherokee Nation.

The Indian Removal Bill proposed by President Jackson was passed by Congress in 1830. This provided millions of dollars to expedite the process of moving the Cherokees to what is modern day Oklahoma. However, the Cherokees would not accept this Congressional Act. They hired lawyers to plead their case before the courts. After several failed attempts, their case made its way to the Supreme Court. The Court ruled that the Cherokee Nation was independent and could not be governed by our laws. However, no one could stop President Jackson, or the State of Georgia, from pursuing the quest of the removal of the Cherokees.

Some Cherokees began to show signs of bending to the President's will. The Cherokee Nation began to split into two groups: those who believed peace was possible

with the United States, and those who believed a treaty should be signed arranging money and help for moving west. It was determined that peace would be given another chance. As these Cherokees pleaded for peace and land security, Cherokees who believed a treaty was necessary held secretive talks with President Jackson. Jackson shrugged off the peace-seekers and drew up a treaty with the others. The deal was this: five million dollars would be given to the Cherokees to cover expenses for their land, the move west, and construction of a new society. For this money, the Cherokee people were to vacate all land east of the Mississippi River.

This backdoor dealing infuriated most Cherokees. The treaty was approved by Congress, but the Cherokees would not relent. In this time a new president, Martin Van Buren, was elected. But his plans for the Cherokee were no different from Jackson's. Congress closed the argument over the issue in 1838. The Cherokees would be forced to leave their land. The new president ordered the military to remove the Cherokees by force. They hunted out all of the Cherokee and began the process of moving them west. Some Cherokee hid in the mountains, but most were rounded up. Soldiers marched the Indians mercilessly to the forts where they would await the time when they would head west to the Oklahoma Territory.

The Cherokee were to make the journey west in several different groups. The plans for the trip called mostly for foot travel over open country. Some of the groups would spend most of the journey on riverboats. Either way was very long and dangerous. The groups left the assembly forts in a staggered formation, with each group leaving a few days after the one before. The farther the groups got from Cherokee land, the harder the journey became. Hundreds died along the way, and their relatives were given little time to bury them and mourn them since they had to keep moving constantly. By the time all of the groups had reached the new Indian Territory, it

is estimated that one fourth of the nearly 16,000 that had left had died along the way. There was no happiness for the Cherokee in their new land. Soon after arriving, the members of the group that had signed the treaty with President Jackson were executed.

Analysis of the Trail of Tears

The Trail of Tears is clear evidence of the American government's abandonment of the idea to assimilate the Native Americans into our society. Up until this time, many people, especially missionaries, were hoping to convert the Indians into fully "civilized" Americans. They had set up schools and churches for the pursuit of this goal. However, the Native Americans still occupied a large area of land that the government had marked as land for westward moving settlers. Americans of those times clearly thought that the Native Americans were not equals, just the same as the African American slaves they owed.

Many Native American leaders had made the effort to become more similar to the whites. They were well educated and as a result some were extremely wealthy. This, however, was apparently not enough. The whites did not want to live with the Native Americans, but they did want to live on their land. Even today, Native Americans are sometimes seen as outcasts. They are seen as a defeated people who were forced to resort to living on reservations, most of which are located in barren areas of land where no whites wanted to live anyway. The population of Native Americans in the country today is only a fraction of the population that was here when European settlers first arrived. Assimilation failed, so extermination and removal were the next steps in ridding the country of the Indian menace.

The most atrocious part of this tragedy is that, at the time, Congress had made such treatment of the Native Americans legal. They passed the Indian Removal Act into federal law. This would obviously be unprecedented in today's society. Even though similar action occurred regarding the Asian Americans during World War II, that action was done as a temporary solution for wartime fears. The Trail of Tears did not occur at a time when the nation was at war. It happened strictly to make the land occupied by the Indians available to whites. Today, this would be seen as a major breach of human rights. Even though most modern day Native Americans have their own tribal governments, they are still American citizens and are now guaranteed all the Constitutional rights given to other Americans. This was not a privilege given to the Native Americans during the time the Trail of Tears occurred.

Today, Native Americans most certainly remember the tragic events that plagued their early dealings with the United States. The Trail of Tears is considered one of the most tragic of any of the events, given the sheer number of Cherokees that died as a result. Other Americans, however, tend to try to forget about these rather large mistakes in our past. There is not much discussion in the history classes of our schools regarding this issue. Like so many other historical events in America, especially regarding Native Americans, this event is considered a stain on our past. As a result of the early treatment of Native Americans, they still tend to distrust any white man who tries to meddle in their affairs. Most prefer a rather dismal life on the Indian reservations to trying to make it in regular American society. Those that do choose to leave the reservation usually have help in enrolling in schools and universities, or in obtaining employment.

Alcoholism is a huge problem on reservations. This must be due to the extreme depression that would most certainly arise from losing everything they could have ever

had. Today, sadly, they certainly seem like a defeated population that has accepted their role in society as outcasts. Due to the increased use of alcohol on reservations today, crime is also a problem. Alcohol consumption frequently results in child abuse and domestic disputes. Since Native Americans usually tend to want to deal with their own problems, they have been granted the right to set up a type of tribal justice. The police forces for reservations are made up of mostly Native Americans. They also have their own style of trial procedure. The reality is that they basically have their own criminal justice systems. For the most serious offenses, the punishment comes in the form of banishment from the reservation. This is the most severe punishment because Native American communities are very close, due to the common trend of large, extended families living in the same area. However, the most common way to deal with a criminal offender is to find some way for them to remain in the community and make the wrong right again. It seems that Native Americans want to do all that they can to preserve what is left of their culture.

Summary of the Mexican-American War

Tension between the United States and Mexico began during the Texas Revolution in 1835. Before this time, Texas was Mexican territory. Due to the inability of the Mexican government to control their land, Texas revolted. The revolution was successful, with the aid of the United States government. Texas became an independent nation and remained that way for nine years. In 1845, Texas was annexed into the United States. Mexico saw this move as an act of aggression by America. They severed diplomatic relations between the two countries.

A border dispute arose regarding the boundary between Texas and Mexico. America was claiming a border that included more land than Mexico was willing to give up. The United States then began to move troops into Texas to guard against a possible Mexican invasion to reclaim Texas. During this time, the Mexican government was going through some tough times. There was a coup, and a Mexican general named Mariano Paredes named himself as the new president of Mexico. The military forces in Texas were put on alert because Paredes was much more of a hard-liner than his predecessor. He swore to the Mexican people that he would not allow any more territory to slip away from their country.

On April 23, 1846, Paredes declared a "defensive war" status with the United States. This meant that Mexican troops would be mobilized to protect the country in case the United States invaded or declared war on Mexico. United States and Mexican military forces situated themselves on opposite sides of the Rio Grande River. On April 24, 1846, minor skirmishes began. On April 25, an American detachment was ambushed and decimated. The fighting continued and on May 8, the Battle of Palo Alto took place. The battle was a decisive victory for the United States. The United States military continued to reinforce their position along the Rio Grande.

On May 13, 1846, the United States officially declared a status of war with Mexico. With this catalyst, American military forces moved to take control of a large body of territory. Forces moved west, southwest, and south, straight into the heart of Mexico. By mid-July, 1846, America had claimed the state of California as United States territory. By the end of that year, all Mexican forces had been driven out of California.

In August of 1846, there was yet another coup in the Mexican government. President Paredes was overthrown by the former dictator of Mexico, General Santa

Anna. Santa Anna was a skilled military tactician, but due to lack of funding, he was unable to maneuver the Mexican military to counter the American forces. On September 25, 1846, the Mexican city of Monterrey was captured. This city was a key point on the map, and it was on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande. American forces were able to begin a massive invasion of Mexico from this position.

As the United States military began to surge deeper into Mexican territory, Santa Anna became desperate. He began planning a counter-offensive to head off the American invasion. He sent Mexican forces north to stop the American advance. As a result, in February, 1847, the two sides met and a battle near the Mexican town of Buena Vista took place. The Mexican forces outnumbered the American forces 3 to 1. It was a huge battle, but neither side could claim victory. However, the Mexican forces did withdraw to fortify defenses around the Mexican capital of Mexico City. American forces continued to push south.

In March, 1847, the United States military invaded and captured the Mexican port of Veracruz. This was another key point on the map. From this port, the United States Navy was able to supply a direct advance on Mexico City. The Mexicans prepared their capital for a siege. By August of 1847, the Americans were just outside of Mexico City. The battle for Mexico City was fierce, but on September 13, 1847, the last Mexican stronghold was captured.

Soon after Mexico City fell to American forces, diplomats began discussing a peace treaty. Although Mexico was obviously beaten, they continually refused to sign any treaty. Negotiations lasted for months, and on February 2, 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was finally signed. However, this treaty was much more than a simple peace settlement. As a condition of peace, the Mexican government was forced to cede a massive area of land that consisted of what is modern day Arizona, California,

Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and portions of Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Wyoming. America had won the war and taken a large step toward westward expansion.

Analysis of the Mexican-American War

The Mexican-American War was the result of belief in the idea of what was known as Manifest Destiny. This was the belief that American expansion was inevitable and democracy should be extended to anywhere that could be obtained. American politicians at this time were very aware that expansion of territory meant expansion of power. California in particular, with its perfect seaports and mineral deposits, was the prize most politicians wanted to claim. Settlers were always moving west in search of free land. It was obvious that settlers would continue to move, regardless of which country claimed the territory. However, it is sad that this westward expansion actually resulted in a war. America was obsessed with the idea of having a country whose borders were the coasts of two oceans. The government had originally sought to obtain land from Mexico by peaceful means, such as paying for the territory. When the Mexican government refused to cooperate, the American government went the other direction and fought for the land.

Like so many other times in America's history, the government chose to use force to take over land, and the result was obtaining more land than what had been previously desired. The reality is, however, that the population of the territory obtained is still very much Hispanic, and it is becoming more so every day. The United States government now sees this as a problem. Illegal immigrants flood over our borders practically uncontested. The small force patrolling the border with Mexico is overwhelmed. Some

immigrants transport narcotics, some are just looking for work. The biggest fear regarding this issue today is that a terrorist organization might exploit this weakness and enter the country. The government is now trying to bolster the number of personnel available to guard our borders. Some are even trying to push for some kind of barrier to be constructed that will limit the immigrant's ability to slip into the country.

Although most of the immigrants are simply looking for a job and a better life, some Americans will exploit these people. They hire them for manual labor and pay them extremely low wages. Most work and save as much as they can. Some send money back to relatives in Mexico. The irony is that most of the Mexican immigrants will take whatever they can get, so they do not complain to the authorities.

Relations between the governments of Mexico and the United States are generally on good terms. Although, there does not seem to be much cooperation as far as the border dispute is concerned. The Hispanic population of America increases every year. The southwest and most major cities are changing dramatically as a result. With more Spanish-speaking people living in America, the idea of bilingual schools is beginning to be discussed. The ability to speak Spanish is becoming a more desirable quality that employers look for in their workers, especially in the criminal justice field.

With the increase in the Hispanic population also comes an increase in crime seen from the Hispanic community. The population of Hispanics seen in prisons is on the rise. Unfortunately, the number of Hispanics entering the criminal justice field as professionals is not climbing in the same way. However, as generations are born in the United States and become a part of American society, it is likely that the number of Hispanic criminal justice professionals will swell.

Conclusion

The events in this analysis occurred at fairly spread out periods through time. Nevertheless, they all have had an effect on modern day life. The Salem Witch Trials taught us to never assume a person is guilty just because they have been accused. The internment of the Japanese during World War II taught us that to live in America should mean living with totally security of your family and property, regardless of race. When examining the tragedy of the Trail of Tears, it is clear that Americans should learn to coexist with people of different cultures and respect their right to live where they want. The Mexican-American War teaches us that nations, as well as people, should learn to coexist and negotiate problems peacefully. It is clear that all of these events have played a part in the development of American society. It is also clear that the American people should not consider these events to be anything but grave mistakes.

The role the government plays in these mistakes shows that the power given to our nation's leaders should be received by them with the utmost consideration for people's lives, and not only American lives. There are continuing race and gender tensions in the United States today, and the government will have to deal with these problems differently than they have been dealt with in the past. No one knows how these kind of events effect the lives of those involved better than the victims. The victims of these events, whether they were involved directly or indirectly, remember what it feels like to be on the receiving end of such mistreatment by trusted officials. This is what elected officials should think of before making a mistake like one of these events again.

Tolerance is the key to living in a peaceful world, tolerance between both individuals and nations. No two people are the same and everyone should try to respect people's differences, either culturally, ethnically, or racially. Intolerance is what

enables events like the those listed in this analysis to occur. The average person is able to see beyond a person's differences and live peacefully, but when certain groups of people are targeted by an institution as powerful as the government, it is hard to see past those differences. This kind of targeting only breeds anger and distrust. This is the way the world has been throughout history. There are innumerable instances of this kind of treatment throughout the world's history. It is only when tolerance is the mainstay of dealing with people that these kind of events will be regarded as a part of history only, and not a part of the present.

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